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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

First US plane in Iran after 23 years - Sabah
US extends a helping hand to Bam - Milliyet
Iran rejects Israel, accepts US help - Hurriyet 12/28
Mullah regime shaken: Iran receives aid from 'great Satan' - Sabah
Turkish rescue teams heroes of Bam - Sabah
Earthquake aid pours into Iran - Aksam
FM Gul: No alternative other than the Annan Plan - Hurriyet
Attacks cause delay in US reform plans for Iraq - Hurriyet
Iraqi resisters strike a heavy blow against coalition forces - Milliyet 12/28
Blair Britain's least trusted leader - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Third day in Bam quake, hopes diminishing - Zaman
Official, civilian Turkish organizations arrive in Bam - Radikal 12/28
Rescue efforts halted in Bam - Cumhuriyet
Bombs shake Karbala - Cumhuriyet 12/28
Kurds, Turkmen seek Arab support in Egypt - Zaman
Barzani wants Arab League support for federal Iraq - Radikal
Iraqi resistance doesn't slow down - Cumhuriyet
Suicide bombers caught in Riyadh - Cumhuriyet
Blair's fall continues - Zaman

BRIEFING

Cyprus: Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots have no alternative but to negotiate on the basis of the Annan Plan to find a solution to the Cyprus problem, Foreign Minister Gul said on Sunday. The MFA will submit to Prime Minister Erdogan on Tuesday a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages of the UN-sponsored plan. Meanwhile, the 50 new lawmakers in the TRNC parliament took their oath of office last Friday. TRNC leader Denktas said he would wait to see developments in Turkey before designating a new prime minister on Monday. Outgoing prime minister Dervis Eroglu said his party, the UBP, would not join a coalition government led by Mehmet Ali Talat's CTP.

MFA reaction to Iraqi Constitution proposal: The MFA said in a statement last Friday that a new Iraqi constitution drafted by the Kurds did not represent all ethnic groups in Iraq, and that it was a violation of the Ankara agreement signed by the US, Iraq and Turkey on March 19, 2003. Iraqi territorial integrity and the security of all the Iraqi people are the main concerns for Turkey.

Turkey's EU envoys on reforms: Turkey's ambassadors to EU countries met with MFA officials last Friday to discuss implementation of EU reforms in 2004. The envoys reportedly said that if all necessary reforms are enacted by June 2004, the EU will have no pretext for delaying accession talks with Ankara. They also stressed that a breakthrough on Cyprus would be a catalyst for Turkey's EU drive.

Israel reiterates significance of ties with Turkey:
Israel's Ambassador to Ankara, Pinhas Avivi, said after

meeting with MFA U/S Ugur Ziyal that Israel would not risk its good ties with Turkey for the sake of improving relations with Northern Iraq. Avivi reportedly told Ziyal that Ankara would be informed immediately of any Israeli activities in Northern Iraq. Ambassador Avivi also conveyed to Ziyal the official Israeli view supporting the territorial integrity of Iraq.

CHP wants top bureaucrat sacked: Opposition party CHP's leader Deniz Baykal said that Omer Dincer, Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry, should be sacked. Dincer said in a speech in 1995 that Turkey's secular and republican regime should be replaced by an Islamic administration. Dincer recently said that his views had not changed since that time. Baykal regards the appointment of Dincer as the top bureaucrat in the prime ministry as a plot against Turkey's secular and democratic system.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq and Us-Turkey Relations

"Waiting for Erdogan"

Asli Aydintasbas evaluated the upcoming Turkish PM's visit to Washington in the mass appeal Sabah (12/29):
"Interestingly enough, Turkish PM Erdogan will start the new year with an official visit to Washington and end it with the EU summit. At this point, his Washington visit does not have a full agenda. Part of the reason is due to Washington's expectation from Ankara on the Cyprus issue. The US hopes to see some progress on Cyprus prior to the Erdogan visit. A concrete plan and a strongly expressed political will for negotiations will be considered progress, yet there are no clear signs to validate such an expectation. In case there is progress on the Cyprus issue, Erdogan will find the Bush administration offering significant support on Cyprus and the EU. If Erdogan comes to Washington without having made any progress on Cyprus, we might see a weak, non-committal outcome on both sides. . On the Iraq issue, the US administration is ready to listen to Turkish concerns, because the federal structure proposed by the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq has infuriated Washington. A federal structure seems to be the right approach for the future of Iraq, yet Washington will not tolerate a de facto division of Iraq under the guise of a federation."

"Iraq's Future in Jeopardy"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-political Dunya (12/29): "It seems that Barzani and Talabani not only agreed to form a government together, but also to shape the future of Iraq. It is going to be a federal republic of Iraq, as they prefer to call it. However, neither Sunni Arabs nor Shiites -- who constitute the majority in Iraq -- were asked about their preferences for the future model of Iraq. Nobody cared whether this majority accepts the 'borders' drawn by the Kurds. In fact, the US does not like the federation formula for Iraq as proposed by the Kurds. Washington would prefer a state system based on the US model. Yet the Arabs are dealing with their own ethnic and tribal problems. In the midst of this infighting, the Kurds have managed to have a strong say over the oil-rich areas even though they are a small minority of the Iraqi population. If all goes according to the Kurdish design, Iraq will be dragged into a very bloody dilemma."

EDELMAN